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From the Editor

Let's Bring Parents Into the Reading Program

"I WOULDN'T touch Johnnie's reading with a ten-foot pole!"

With this despairing comment, one of my friends disposed of the reading problem of her 8-year-old who was certainly not enjoying his reading. She had just come from a visit to Johnnie's teacher and had been given what I call the "Hands off" treatment.

"Reading is a school problem," she had been told in essence. "Let us alone and we will do the job of teaching Johnnie." And with no further explanation or discussion, the school spokesman sent her on her way to worry and fume alone.

As I meet with parents in various parts of the country, I am amazed to find that many have been given this "Hands off" treatment. These parents are worried when they feel their children are not doing well in reading. They want to help. But when they ask how, they get not a bucket, but a tankful, of cold water in their faces.

Yet scholarly research and practical experience tell us that home background and experience are strong influences on the child's progress and enjoyment of reading. We know, too, the child's insecurity or anxieties at home are brought to school where they affect his attitudes and hence his progress.

Parents can be of tremendous help in the teaching of reading. And in

many instances they are helping. But for some, it has meant learning that it is not helping just to hear Johnnie read a list of "hard" words in isolation every evening or to prod and nag him to keep up with the boy next door.

Reports from many communities show that teachers are going beyond the classroom to enlist parent help in the teaching of reading. They are forming discussion groups for parents and teachers. They are having frequent conferences with individual parents. And in some communities, they are sending copies of *THE READING TEACHER* to parents to read and discuss in their community groups.

Nancy Larrick, Editor

In the March Issue

"What Are the Basic Reading Study Skills?" by Leo Fay

"Reading in the Content Fields" by Elona Sochar

"Developing Critical Readers" by Joseph Gainsburg

"The Role of Books in a Developmental Program of Reading" by Leland Jacobs.

"A Reading Program for College Students" by Douglas F. Parry

Reports on the addresses at the Atlantic City meeting of I.C.I.R.I., book and magazine reviews, news of local councils.

Standardized Tests Can Help the Classroom Teacher Improve Reading Instruction

by Marvin D. Glock

Director, University Testing and Service Bureau

Cornell University

Ithaca, New York

YOUR SUCCESS as a teacher must be judged in terms of the desirable changes which you are able to effect in the skills, attitudes and knowledges of your pupils. The statement is a cliché, but practice indicates that teacher effectiveness is all too often evaluated by highlighting the criteria of training and methodology *per se*. These are but a means to an end.

A teacher is considered scientific by some if she administers standardized tests. However, unless she uses the results of these tests effectively to help her boys and girls become better readers, no value can possibly accrue from their use. This is obvious. Yet a surprisingly large number of test results find their way into the principal's files where they are preserved for posterity.

Evaluation vs Testing

Good teaching implies continuous evaluation. We should note that testing is not synonymous with evaluation. The latter is much broader in scope. Testing is only one technique which can be employed in evaluation. It cannot provide all of the desirable information. Evaluation through interviews and observation is important too. Although our tests have definite limitations, it may be desirable to dis-

Informal classroom diagnosis of reading difficulties on page 10 is discussed by Dr. E. W. Dolch.

cuss ways to make them do the best possible job for us.

In skill diagnosis, we must caution ourselves not to take a limited viewpoint. Too frequently the emphasis remains on the symptoms rather than on the causes. Both are important. The pupil's ability to perform on a reading diagnostic test may provide only a part of the information necessary to help him. There may be other problems, motivational or emotional in nature, which preclude growth of his skills.

Values of Testing

Let us therefore take a broad view of the entire problem of diagnosing reading difficulties, with particular emphasis on the use of tests. What is their value? Obviously they provide a way of getting at specific learning difficulties. If a pupil has inadequate techniques of word recognition, it is important for you to know this, but also to be able to pinpoint his problem. A systematized approach to diagnosis in the form of a test is often more inclusive and therefore more

valid than a subjective estimate based on observation alone.

There are direct benefits for the student too. Evidence shows that a knowledge of test results is motivating for the learner. He finds out where he is successful, and his weaknesses are pointed up for guided learning. A need for practice with concerted effort can be made obvious to him.

Testing helps the teacher in the formulation of her objectives, providing direction for her instruction. Before she can test adequately, she must be able to answer the questions "What changes do I want to bring about in my students? In what particulars am I trying to help them improve?" These answers will also provide her a basis for the selection of content and the structuring of learning experiences in her classroom.

The teacher who knows where she is going can take advantage of many situations as they arise. When a youngster bursts forth with a spontaneous question, comment, or experience, she will be able to weave it into her instruction. Can you think of anything more frustrating for the pupil than to say to him, "We'll get around to that next week"? Instructional plans can be made flexible if you've clarified your aims.

Informal and Standardized Tests

There are two general types of tests available for use—the informal teacher-made test and the standardized instrument. Both serve important purposes. Neither alone can be expected to provide adequate information. One of the greatest strengths of the informal test is that the teacher can con-

struct it so as to determine the effectiveness of her children's particular learning experiences.

The standardized test on the other hand measures achievement which the specialists believe important for pupils in general. It is possible that your boys and girls may or may not have had opportunities to learn all materials sampled by such a test. This factor should be considered when results are interpreted.

Good standardized tests have been administered to representative groups of children under very specific conditions. Averages of performance are obtained which we call norms. *Norms are not standards. Their purpose is not to provide goals. They are simply statistical averages of performance.* You may have cause for concern if some of your pupils are not above the norm. On the other hand the dullards may never be able to reach it.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of following the instructions to the letter for administering and scoring the test if the norms are to be of value. Carelessness in following time limits, substitution or omission of words in the directions, and helping pupils interpret problems are some of the common mistakes which tend to invalidate test results.

Standardized instruments also have the advantage of being constructed by experts who have had a great deal of experience in making test questions. It requires considerable know-how to set up a test which will actually do what it's supposed to do and do it consistently. Pass a critical eye over some of the comprehension questions which you have made. Is the pupil

able to give a correct answer by matching a word or two in the question with the same words in the context? Is it necessary for him really to read and comprehend?

Douglass and Spitzer (1) give an example illustrating the above.

A second grade reading selection:

"Father was going to the store.

Jane was going to school.

Father walked.

Jane rode on a bicycle.

Mother waved to Jane."

The questions:

1. Who rode on a bicycle? . . .
2. Who waved to Jane? . . .
3. Who walked? . . .
4. Where was father going? . . .

The child may find the answers by doing little more thinking than the teacher did in setting up the questions. It is certain that not a great deal of understanding is required.

Intelligence Tests

In locating a pupil's problems a measure of intelligence is helpful. When is a child retarded? The boy whose reading grade is a year or more below the norm may be achieving as well as can be expected with his ability. No, our criterion must be the comparability of his reading grade and his ability to learn. A youngster with an I. Q. of 130 should certainly be classified as retarded if he reads no better than average. Likewise, Bill, whose I. Q. is 80, is not necessarily retarded if he doesn't read as well as the average pupil. Our chief interest should be to help him read as well as he can—not to get him up to the norm.

This interpretation should also be

applied to class and school scores. Instruction should not be criticized on the basis of achievement scores alone.

It is always wise to check test scores against other measures. No psychological instrument is 100% reliable. Nor do these tests always do what they are supposed to do. If an intelligence test requires skill in reading, it is actually measuring more than innate ability when completed successfully. Likewise it may be giving an inaccurate picture of a child's intelligence if that youngster cannot read well. We may have in the score a measure of the child's lack of reading ability. Therefore, it is always wise to question extreme scores and also those results which vary widely with the teacher's expectation. If a group test has been administered to these pupils, it is wise to have them rechecked with an individual test if possible.

In one test (2) there is an attempt to provide a measure of the child's ability through language and non-language intelligence quotients and a combination of the two. If the first two I. Q.'s are marked by disparity, the reason may well be one of reading disability. There are other measures which attempt to get at capacity through means other than reading. All of these can be of help to the teacher if she uses them with care. (3, 4)

Survey Tests

A good teacher is similar to a big league ballplayer when it comes to batting averages. Neither bats 1,000. In other words, you can't help all boys and girls in your large classes as much

as you'd like to. Some need help more than others. These people can be located through the survey test, which tends to evaluate such factors as vocabulary, comprehension, and rate.

If results indicate that a pupil's achievement is definitely below his mental ability, it is then possible to follow through with a diagnostic test to get at the crux of the difficulty. The survey test also provides a group picture. It may show that the class as a whole is working below capacity. This is certainly cause for concern. If, however, only a few individuals appear to be out of line, the problem is much simpler.

Diagnostic Tests

Since the diagnostic test samples many skills requiring considerable time and effort to administer, it is not necessary to give it to all pupils. Certainly those students whose survey test scores are below their potentialities should be tested first. A great deal more information about these youngsters is generally needed than can be gotten from survey test scores. An analysis of word attack skills, problems in comprehension such as word, sentence and paragraph reading, are all helpful in determining where the child is.

Measures of Study Skills

As teachers of reading we are responsible for helping boys and girls develop work-study skills. Even with the youngster in the primary grades there should be developed certain habits of study based on sound principles of the psychology of learning.

There are some very simple and effective rules which relatively immature minds can grasp. Certainly, boys and girls in the intermediate grades could follow the suggested steps for thorough study symbolized in an effective little code by Robinson (5). He calls it the Survey Q3R method of study. When the purpose is to retain main ideas and details, it is well for the reader to get an overview of the chapter or article. If a summary is provided, it should be read first. Glance over the paragraph headings. You will be better able to understand the relationship of the various aspects of a chapter. The Q stands for question. If the topical headings are not set up as questions, change them. This gives purpose to reading. R number 1 asks one to read to answer the question. R number 2 requests recall immediately. Stop at the end of the paragraph. If you can answer the question in your own words you are all set to continue. If you can't, recall will have directed your re-reading. It is well to emphasize here also that one of the best deterrents of forgetting is recall after a learning experience. The final R represents review from a simple outline of notes in the reader's own words.

There are important study skills also such as map reading, use of references, use of index, use of dictionary, and alphabetization. One of the best study skills tests available is the "Work-Study Skills: Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills." (6)

Interest Inventories

A teacher was amazed to find how much arithmetic her pupils learned

when problems dealing with apples were changed to those concerned with baseballs. The reason is simple. They became interested. The very heart of motivation is interest. Developmental and remedial work should be based on materials of interest to the pupil. You have found out about pupil interests in a variety of ways—class discussion, oral and written reports, interviews and questionnaires, etc. Harris (7), Hildreth (8), and Witty and Kopel (9) present some excellent suggestions on the construction of the latter. At present, the author is not aware of any standardized interest inventory for elementary pupils. This should not deter you from using every means possible to find out what your boys and girls like to read about. We must begin at this point.

Personality Tests

Although emotional problems are commonly associated with inability to read, it is often difficult to determine whether reading disability is cause or effect. We do know, however, that there are numerous adjustment problems among children which can be successfully resolved with the teacher's help. It is common knowledge that the achievement of the learner is adversely affected by undue emotional stress. The importance of attacking these difficulties with promptness and understanding is obvious.

The paper and pencil personality test is widely advertised as a helpful instrument in clarifying these problems. It is unfortunate that the advertising and manuals of these tests make exaggerated claims. The score which a child receives by answering

a few questions with Yes or No cannot give as complete a diagnosis as is often suggested. Neither is it always safe for the teacher to follow prescribed treatments when scoring yields certain results.

If there is good rapport between the teacher and her pupils, they will tend to give truthful answers. A great deal can be learned about a child by studying his answers to the various questions. Total scores are often helpful in directing your attention to a particular child.

Perhaps a quiet, "well-behaved" youngster may have an emotional problem. He may be withdrawing from reality and attempting to achieve his satisfactions through fantasy. You had been concerned with the behavior of the "extrovert" who threw the paper wads. Now you find that the quiet child is in greater need of help.

It may be necessary to refer this pupil to a professional person who can cope with the difficulty. On the other hand, you may be able to help him resolve his problem. Often when these children are accepted by the group, they are on the road to recovery. Guidance from you can accomplish this. But after an adjustment has been made, we still must begin where he is relative to achievement. He must be taught how to read.

Selecting Tests

Bond (10), McKee (11) and Russell (12) have all listed and categorized various kinds of standardized tests. It is well to select your tests carefully and for a definite purpose. Most of those available can be found in Buros'

Mental Measurements Yearbook (13). Each is discussed by one or more competent authorities. Weaknesses and strengths are stressed. Often helpful suggestions are given for the interpretation of scores. Every school's professional library would do well to have this volume available for staff use.

When to Administer Tests

It is unnecessary to test children's intelligence every year. Some authorities consider the administration of such a test at the time of entrance into school, at the end of the sixth grade and again when he enters senior high school as being quite adequate. Others would suggest that another measure be obtained at the end of the third grade.

General survey reading tests may either be administered at the end or at the beginning of every year. Those who favor the former time point out that the test results are ready for the teacher to use the next fall. She is better able to make a good start if she knows about her pupils when they first come into her room.

It is also suggested that if a teacher scores the papers of children whom she has taught, it is easier for her to spot weaknesses which may lie in her instruction. She will not likely study the scores of her former youngsters if she is busy administering and scoring tests and interpreting results for a new group of pupils the next fall.

Those who advocate test administration at the beginning of the term point to large changes in the school population making it necessary to do

a great deal of testing anyway. They also feel that a teacher gets to know her students more quickly if she administers and scores their tests. You must consider strengths and weaknesses of both procedures in terms of the problems peculiar to your school. If the survey tests are administered in the spring, the teacher might follow through with the necessary diagnostic testing in the fall.

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How to Diagnose Children's Reading Difficulties By Informal Classroom Techniques

by E. W. Dolch
School of Education
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

THE FIRST SIGN of a poor reader is his attitude toward reading. He does not want to read. He looks away from his book instead of into it. Also he probably shows a general dislike of school or school work which has resulted from failure in reading. In fact, as soon as a teacher sees a conduct case, she should immediately look into the reading problem with that child. None of us likes what we fail at, and failure in school usually means dislike of school and of teachers and of books and of all related matters. And the most usual failure in school is in reading.

Failure to get lessons done is very often a sign of poor reading. The

pupil may look into his book and seem to be studying earnestly. But instead of studying the lesson, he is studying the words and sentences, trying to make something out of them.

Children often get wrong answers because of poor reading, and teachers call it "carelessness." Children often fail to finish assignments because of poor reading, and teachers call it "laziness."

Before we use those condemning words, let us find out about the reading ability. It is astounding how, in middle and upper grades, children can go on for weeks or months as poor readers without the teacher's realizing the fact.

Locating the Poor Readers

If, however, the teacher takes the precaution at the beginning of the term, of having every child read something orally, these mistakes could not happen. She can best make this oral test by telling the class that they want to become acquainted with a new book, and she wants to know how hard the book is. To find out how hard the book is, they will all take part in reading it aloud.

As fast as they can, each will read a sentence in turn. Then several things may happen. First, some child may refuse to read. The teacher will cheerfully say, "All right. Next one read on." Or a child will read with great hesitation and difficulty. To him, the teacher will instantly supply any word that stops him, say "Good," and go on. Since each reads but one sentence, there will be little embarrassment.

But the teacher will have her poor readers picked out for her at once. Many of the children may have trouble sounding out really hard words, or may cheerfully mispronounce hard words. Both facts tell the teacher that most of the class need a review of sounding. But this quick oral reading will locate in a few minutes the poor readers who need further attention.

Children indicated as poor readers need to be further diagnosed. This is usually done individually and privately before school or during a recess period or after school. It should be done in as friendly and incidental a way as possible.

A good plan is to have on the desk a pile of easy, attractive looking

books. Ask the child, "Do any of these look interesting?" He will finger them and open them up. The teacher will notice which one he dwells upon, thus showing some interest.

If the book seems suitable, she will say, "Read me some of it. Just any place that looks like a good story." Then as the boy tries to read, she will note mentally several important and definite things.

How Does He Handle Little Words?

First, what does the child do with the little words that appear constantly, such as *was* and *they* and *very* and the like. Does he recognize them? Does he miscall any of them? Does he recognize them easily or does he do so slowly and with difficulty?

The importance of these common words is that no one can read easily and smoothly at any level unless he knows these common words surely and quickly. If the child does not know these common words surely and rapidly, he can easily be taught them with the aid of a fellow pupil. He must be given reading matter of first or second grade level, which is made up principally of the common words. Beside him must sit a helper who will tell him every word on which he hesitates. Then he must reread to show that he now does not need to be told.

Or these words can be taught by means of games. At any rate, without quick recognition of the common words, there is nothing that can be called successful reading.

How Does He Attack Hard Words?

Second, if the child knows the common words surely and easily, what

happens when he comes to a *hard word or one he does not know*? For one thing, he may just guess and go on. If so, he has the habit of "skip and guess" which many children are forced into by being given material that is beyond them. Such a child needs oral reading, with a gentle pressure to read exactly what is on the page. Reading with a helper is required, either a helper at home or in school.

Another thing that may happen is that the child may try to call the strange word by seeing familiar parts in it. He may use part of the beginning, the middle or the end, leaving out parts he does not know, and struggling to make up some word from what he sees. This is the "familiar-part" attack which good readers use so successfully. That is, the good reader sees some familiar parts, and the context suggests to him the word which must be there.

The only trouble is that, on the one hand, the poor reader does not use context skillfully, and on the other, he does not have in his head the large meaning vocabulary from which the good reader draws his words. For instance, when the good reader sees "it was und - - - edly true" he infers that the word is "undoubtedly." But the poor reader does not know the word "undoubtedly," and therefore he is not helped by the familiar parts. So the poor reader will often show, by the strange things he calls new words, that he is trying the familiar-parts method, but without success. The teacher watches the pupil's every mistake, and from each mistake she learns what the pupil is doing.

Another kind of attack the poor reader may use is letter sounding. If he just moves his lips or whispers, the teacher will encourage him to try out loud so that she can help him. He may refuse to do this if he is too afraid, but even if he does not sound out loud, the teacher watches the result of his tries.

Of course she praises whatever he does. No matter how grotesque the result, she says, "Fine. That was a good try." Or she may say, "You almost got it. The word is so-and-so." Only if the child feels her active friendliness will he show what his troubles are so that he can be helped.

Some of the results the teacher may find are, for instance, that the child calls all vowels long, or cannot blend consonants, or knows no vowel combinations, or sounds the parts but cannot get the word, and so on. Such information is vitally necessary if the teacher is to help the poor reader.

Division into syllables is the best kind of attack on long words. It will probably not be found with poor readers, but if it is, there may be trouble in making the right word from the syllables. That is, the child may correctly divide the word, sound the syllables, say them one after another, and still not know what the word is. Usually this is a sign that he does not have the word in his hearing vocabulary. But when the teacher says the word, he may show that he really knows what that word is. In such a case, there is undoubtedly difficulty in what is called "synthesis," that is, putting the parts together into the known word.

Does He Understand the Meaning?

Third, we come to the problem of *comprehension*. Here the teacher who is diagnosing the child's trouble will look for three things. Most important, does the pupil know the meaning of the words he reads? She will ask about particular words. What does this one mean, or that?

Whatever the answer, she will praise attempts or guesses. The slightest sign of censure or scorn will assure the child that he is being criticized or made fun of just as he has been criticized or made fun of by pupils and teachers for years.

The chances are that the long sentences in the text are too long for the child's comprehension. Have him read a long sentence, and then ask him to tell in his own words what it says. If he cannot, let him try again. It may be he just has the habit of saying words without attention to the thought. If, after he has tried several times, he still cannot tell what the sentence says, then obviously it is beyond his span of attention to ideas. This may be the explanation of why his textbook is beyond him.

The third check is upon comprehension of paragraphs. It has two aspects. First, can the pupil, after reading a paragraph of six to eight lines, tell rather completely all that is said in the paragraph? This is an aspect of span of attention for ideas. Let the pupil have several tries to see if the problem is inability or inattention.

The other aspect of paragraph reading is selection. Can the child select the important idea from what

he reads in a paragraph or do the ideas seem equally important to him? This, of course, is a rather advanced ability, and does not come to children nearly so soon as we imagine. Likewise, it will not come to many unless there is skillful teaching. Hence, this check is not so significant in the case of poor readers. But the other checks are. It is so very common for children in the middle and upper grades to be reading words for which they have no meaning, or sentences that they do not understand, with a result that when they are through they have no idea of what they have covered.

The Complete Teacher Check

Perhaps we should here emphasize that this complete teacher check does not happen just as we have described it. For one thing, there may not be time at odd moments of conference with a pupil to run through all of these steps. The child may read for the teacher a little now and a little then, while she encourages and makes friends, and builds up for herself this complete picture of the child's reading.

For another thing, not all of these steps may be necessary in any one case. If a child does not know the common words or has no word attack, a check on his comprehension is hardly possible. Or a child may obviously have certain skills but not others. All of these things depend on the grade concerned, and the particular child.

A teacher, of any grade, however, should have clearly in mind the things she would like to know about the child's reading. As we have presented them, they are:

A. Does he know the common words?

1. How many?
2. How accurately?
3. How rapidly?

B. What kind of word attack and how successful?

1. Mere skip and guess
2. Familiar parts
3. Letter sounding
4. Syllabication

C. Comprehension

1. Word meanings
2. Sentence comprehension
3. Paragraph comprehension
 - a. Details
 - b. Important ideas

The teacher who tries this method of informal diagnosis of reading difficulties will be surprised at how rapidly she develops skill in its use. She will find before long that she can tell a surprising amount about a child's reading abilities and habits just by hearing him read a little from almost any book. She will find herself using this diagnostic ability easily and frequently in school work of all kinds. And the children under her charge will benefit greatly, for the teacher with the ability to diagnose reading difficulties will become in every possible way a better teacher of reading.

New Local Reading Councils Are Being Formed

The persons listed below have requested information about forming local councils of the I.C.I.R.I. Others who are interested are asked to get in touch with the one in their area who is now considering formation of a council.

California, Joseph J. Adams, 2772 N. Lake Ave., Altadena.

Wallace M. Hallberg, 2348 Mariposa St., Fresno.

Myrtle V. Will, P.O. Box 1178, Imperial Beach.

Christine Vose & Dorothy Upton, 769 E. California, Pasadena.

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Mechanics vs Meaning — Testing vs Teaching

A Plea for the Right Start in Comprehension

by Daisy M. Jones

*Director, Elementary Education
Richmond, Indiana*

IF YOUR OBJECTIVE is to teach the use of the printed page as a means of comprehending the meaning of the author, then why start in the opposite direction? Why not start directly toward the goal? Let comprehension of meaning be the major objective at all times. Let mastery of mechanics be the by-product.

If your purpose is to teach, then why start out by testing? Why not use the time and the energy to teach the child how and give him an opportunity to practice that which he has learned as a result of the teaching? Let testing or checking be the measuring device that comes at the end after the teaching and practicing have taken place.

Let us examine a few classroom situations to see which is means and which is end product—comprehension or mechanics. Let us reflect on lesson sequence to see if we are checking up, finding errors, and providing corrective measures or if we are presenting new concepts through teaching, providing opportunities for successful performance, then measuring the results of the end product. Your philosophy of education, what you believe to be your responsibility in working with the children, will show up in the lesson sequence and in the point of emphasis.

Mechanics or Meaning?

Do you know what you believe? Where do you put the emphasis in your teaching? Examine the following statement of beliefs. Do you believe:

1. That you can't read till you know the words?
2. That you get thought from the printed page?
3. That reading is a mechanical process used in getting thought from the printed page?
4. That the printed page is a source of information?

If you believe these things, then you belong to the school of thought that emphasizes mechanics. Your objective is the mastery of mechanical skill in the hope that comprehension of meaning will come later.

Now examine this set of beliefs. Do you believe:

1. That you learn words by using them in reading situations?
2. That reading is a thought-getting process which is eventually reduced to a mechanical skill through usage?
3. That you bring thought to the printed page?
4. That experience is the source of information and that the printed page merely recalls meaningful associations?

If you believe these things, then you belong to the school of thought that emphasizes meanings. Your objective is the comprehension of meaning, and skill in mechanics becomes the by-product of your teaching. Oh! yes, it will come; it must come, but it is not the initial approach.

What you believe will show up in the typical expressions that creep into your daily lessons. It will be evident in the sequence and point of emphasis in the teaching of reading at any level. It will show in the approach—the approach to beginning reading, the approach to a new story, or the approach to a new reading situation. It will show in the place and purpose of drill in reading skills.

Yes, there will be drill in either case. It is not a matter of “to drill or not to drill,” but a matter of when to drill, and on what, and why. It will show up in the relation between silent and oral reading. It is not an either-or situation when it comes to silent and oral reading. It is a matter of purpose, relationship, and sequence. An examination of some typical classroom situations will make the meaning clear.

Mechanics as Emphasis

If you believe that mechanical skill is more important than meaning, your approach will be: Learn the words; Study your lesson; Get ready to read.

You will begin with a word list. You will tell the children the words and emphasize the importance of remembering them because they will need them in the new story. You will give them a lesson to study. Their purpose will be to get ready to recite.

They will approach the recitation period hoping they have mastered all the things the teacher will ask in order that they may render a successful performance and get the coveted word of praise. The lesson period itself will be a mere check on the effectiveness of the child's attempt to study or learn independently.

When the lesson is in progress, you will hear yourself using some of the following expressions: “How many times did you read your lesson?” “Did you know every word?” “Did you look up the words you didn't know?” “Are you ready to read this morning, Johnny?” “Isn't that fine! I liked the way Johnny read this morning. He knew every word.” “Did anyone hear any mistakes?” “How many words did he miss?” “Maybe tomorrow you had better take your book home and practice.” “Good readers know every word.”

Have you heard any of these expressions? Have you ever used any of them yourself? I wonder what the story was about; but comprehension of the story was not the objective because we were talking about the teacher who believes that mechanical skill is the major objective and that comprehension of meaning will come later.

The lesson sequence will begin with an assignment. It may come at the end of a reading recitation period with, “For tomorrow we will begin on page 97 and read over to page 101. I'll put some questions on the blackboard for you in the morning.” There is no particular point to attacking the new assignment now so the children put their books away. In the morning

the questions appear and hands wave in the air. "Must we write out the answers?" It's a task to be done. How does the teacher want us to do it? Anything to please. Lessons are read, answers are written, and time for recitation comes. Then what happens?

This is the way the lessons go. "How many of you found all the answers?" "Let me see your papers." "You may read first this morning, Mary." Now the process of taking turns at oral reading begins. Mary is a good reader. She knows all the words. She gets through her paragraph on her page with few or no errors, and we move on to the next victim.

He is not so fortunate. When Billy reads, the children look around. They wave their hands violently in the air wanting to tell him the words. They skip on ahead and lose the place. The teacher raises her eyebrows and taps her pencil on the edge of the grade book. She may even sigh with relief when Billy is through. His reading is constantly interrupted with such expressions as, "Now look at that word. Don't you know it?" "We had it yesterday. How does it begin? No. Who can tell him?"

In an attempt to improve reading you may resort to drill. You may drill on the "new words" as given in the word list in the back of the book. You may ask the children to say the list of words. You may do this before or after the reading. You may ask Billy to take a list home with him to have his mother hear him say them. But this does not keep him from saying "that" for "what" and "then"

for "when" as he reads orally.

Then you resort to word analysis or phonetic drill hoping to teach him how to tell the difference. Now he knows that one begins with "th" and the other begins with "wh". He can tell them apart, but he can't remember which is which. We are no farther along than we were.

Meaning as Emphasis

If you believe that meaning is basic and that mechanics are the by-product, your approach will be: "Let's see if we can find out what Mother said." "Can you find out by reading the first line on the next page whether or not Mother let them go?" "There are just three people in this story. See how quickly you can find their names on the first page." "Just one word will tell what Michael made. See how quickly you can find it. How many times can you find that same word on this page?" "The two boys were talking about different kinds of 'pens'. See if you can find out what they were and why it was a joke on them."

In this case you begin with the point to the story. You emphasize finding out. You meet new words head on and have a need for them. Perhaps the new word which tells what Michael is making is "boat". You may say, "I won't need to help you with this new word which tells what Michael is making because you can see it in the picture." That is a picture clue. The author put the pictures there for a real purpose, and he meant for us to use them in teaching.

Perhaps the new word is "laugh-

ed". You may say, "Mother thought it was funny and she did something. See if you can find out what it was. It is a new word, but I don't think I will have to tell you. It begins like 'look'. Did you find it?" That is a context clue supported by a phonetic clue in the form of an initial consonant compared to a known word.

The lesson sequence will begin with a motive for reading the story, a curiosity for finding out, an eagerness to know what happened, pure joy in reading the story. If children have handled the books over and over again, if they have been pulled through the same stories unsuccessfully on previous occasions, if they have sat idly by and listened to a more advanced group read the same stories over and over, then there is no point to reading the story. The material must be fresh and exciting to the readers. There must really be something new for them to find out.

As we approach the story, we may discuss similar events within our own experience; we may anticipate the outcome; we may study the pictures for clues to the climax; we may decide what we would do under similar circumstances. Now we are ready to read to find out what really happened.

New words or bothersome words appear in context. We meet them in response to a question rather than in isolated and abstract testing situations. Our objective is to find out what happened in the story. We read silently to get our answers.

Next comes the discussion of what we have learned from the story. In this discussion, misconceptions will

come to light, points will be cleared up, troublesome vocabulary will be revealed and clarified perhaps with blackboard presentation and the use of all possible clues from context, picture, or phonetic analysis, and meaning will be evident.

Now we are ready for the oral reading. The child is not being tested to see if he knows all the words. He is sharing with others his interpretation of a passage that already has meaning for him. It may be to show how a character sounded, to describe a scene, to express excitement or action, or to prove a point. Of course the oral reading is successful. We have just taught him how to do it. Now the oral reading becomes a positive experience for the child. It is a pleasure for the teacher because she has an opportunity to see the fruits of her efforts. The child practices good oral reading. Therefore, that is the kind he learns to do.

Drill or practice may fit into his picture, too. If so, it is for the purpose of perfecting skills essential to good expression in oral reading. We examine "was" and "saw" to see how they are alike and how they are different. We read both of them into the same sentence to see which makes sense. We come to an inductive conclusion about the pronunciation. We may make lists of words that begin or end alike or contain the same element in order that we can generalize on some basic facts that will give us independence in drawing similar conclusions when we meet other words in the future.

If you still believe that reading is a mechanical process and that it is your

responsibility to teach words, then you may expect the children to puzzle over the hieroglyphics on the printed page and try to make associations of meaningless sounds with equally meaningless symbols. The outcome is bound to be a parrot-like memory process and a word-calling rendition in the oral reading process. It is true that some of the brilliant ones may some day see the connection and begin to associate meaning with the process, but by that time, habits are formed and the children are bound to become adults who must go on through life laboring with verbalization of all material read. If they do not actually verbalize through audible expression or through lip movement, they will at least read with tense vocal cords.

If you are convinced that reading is a thought process, then you may expect children to read to find out needed information or to enjoy the sequence of the story. They will apply reasoning instead of memory to word attack. They will see silent reading as the getting of thought and oral reading as the expression of thought. They will learn to blend context clues and phonetic analysis in the word recognition process. They will gain skill through practice on material within their present level and grow through constant raising of sights.

Testing vs Teaching

Do you teach? Or do you test? Where do you put the emphasis in the daily classroom routine? Examine the following set of statements regarding beliefs. Do you believe:

1. That the purpose of the study

period is to get ready for the recitation period to follow?

2. That the silent reading, or so-called study period, is for the purpose of learning words so one can make a good impression, that is, know all the words, make a good mark, pass, or get a word of praise?

3. That the purpose of the discussion period is to give a check on the effectiveness of independent study?

4. That oral reading is a test of skill and vocabulary mastery?

If you believe these things, then you have adopted a philosophy of education based on assigning, testing, and correcting. You obviously believe that it is your responsibility as a teacher to make assignments, see that the children do the work, check up on them to see if they did, pass judgment on the results, evaluate and reward or penalize, and finally correct errors.

The teaching, if any, comes in the final step. By then habits of failure or incorrect response are firmly rooted, and attitudes of negativism are well established. Children learn to ignore corrections, passively resist instruction, and in some cases actively rebel against learning.

Now examine this set of beliefs. Do you believe:

1. That the purpose of the study period is to utilize the facts, skills, or understandings that have just been learned?

2. That the silent reading period is for the purpose of getting the content either for information or for enjoyment?

3. That the discussion is to clarify content, organize thinking, share experiences, and reveal explanations?

4. That oral reading is a means of sharing facts, feelings, or interpretations?

If you believe these things then you have adopted a philosophy of education based on developmental teaching, purposeful practice, and measurement of growth. You believe it is your responsibility as a teacher to help the child meet new situations, lead him to use the skills at his command, guide him in acquiring independence, and provide ample opportunity for successful practice. Testing will come after learning has taken place. It will be the basis for recording level of development and rate of progress. The teaching will be the initial step in the process. Practice will be correct. Habits of success and positive attitudes will be formed. Children will learn to face new situations with courage and will welcome learning experience.

Your philosophy of education will show up in the lesson sequence and in the evaluative criteria. If you still are not sure whether you teach or test, where you put the emphasis in the daily classroom routine, what your philosophy is, look at some of the following typical classroom situations and see if you can identify yourself with any of them.

The Task-Master Approach

If you are acting on the philosophy of the task-master, you will find yourself saying, "For tomorrow read the whole story through carefully twice. Use the dictionary on all the words you don't know. Write out the answers to the questions at the end." That is an assignment.

You may approach some of the new words in one of the following ways: "Here are our new words this morning. Does anyone know them all? Let's hear you say them, Susan." Or "Let's put on the blackboard the words you didn't know. Who can help us with them?" Or "I made a list of the words we mispronounced yesterday. We'll practice on them first this morning so we won't miss any of them today in our reading." That constitutes drill.

The recitation may go something like this. "Read the first question, Mary." "May we hear your answer, Sam?" "Did any one have a different answer?" "You may read next, Tom." "All right, that is far enough." "Go on, Anna." "No, look at that word." "Who can tell her?" At the end of a particularly poor oral rendition, we may take time out to do some remediation and correction by way of word study on the blackboard. This may involve phonetic analysis or word drill. We may do it over and over again hoping repetition will be a panacea.

The child's oral response will be labored oral reading. He will be quoting answers verbatim from the text. He will resort to word calling and finger pointing. He will be saying the words. His concern will be for successful performance and teacher approval. He will resort to repetition for perfection in mechanical skill. He will look to the teacher to prompt him when he does not know, remedy his performance, and correct his mistakes.

Your evaluation will take the form of measurement and compensation.

You will find yourself asking such questions as: "How many words has he learned?" "How many of the questions did he answer correctly?" "How many mistakes did he make?" "What was his score?" "How much was it worth?" "Did he pass?" Measured results will be in terms of objective criteria and mechanical skills. Evaluation will be in terms of predetermined standards of performance. Compensation will be in the form of rewards such as praise, prizes, stars, good marks, or recognition. If results are not forthcoming, the compensation will be criticism, poor marks, and lack of approval.

The Developmental Approach

If you are acting on the philosophy of developmental teaching and a positive approach, you will find yourself saying, "Today our new story is about a boy just your age. He had an exciting adventure with some Indians. When do you think the story might have happened? Where would you guess it took place? You will meet some unusual Indian names. Here they are on the blackboard. Watch for them in your reading. Let's look at the pictures first to see if they give any clue as to where and when the story took place. What does the map tell you? Let's read to find out why Jim was frightened and how he saved the day." That is an assignment. Note the approach that is made to the new words.

The recitation will follow the silent reading and may go something like this. "Why was Jim frightened?" "What did he do about it?" "How did he save the day?" "Let's turn

back to the beginning of the story. Find the part that described the setting. As you read it to us, make us feel the mystery about the place." "How do you know it was winter? Read the part that proves it." "How did Jim react when he was excited? Read what he said and make us feel his excitement." "Do you think the Indian was frightened, too?" "Read the part that proves it."

Notice the lesson sequence based on the philosophy of developmental teaching. There was a motive for the silent reading. It was based on the content of the story rather than on the desire for mechanical perfection. The vocabulary problems were met in content and new or unfamiliar words were given meaning as well as pronunciation before they were needed in the oral reading. The silent reading was for the purpose of getting meanings and enjoying the thought content of the story. As new concepts, not necessarily new words, were met, they were clarified either individually in response to requests for help or as a group in discussion. The discussion was designed to give meaning to the content and to clear up misconceptions or vague ideas. When the oral reading stage was reached, it was a culmination and an opportunity to share meanings rather than a test of his ability to perform before the entire group.

Now the child's oral response will be in terms of thought to express. He will tend to tell what happened instead of repeat the words of the book. His oral reading will be for the purpose of conveying thought rather than to pronounce words. His concern

will be for the message he has to impart rather than for the mechanical performance he may give or the evaluation his teacher may make.

Your evaluation will take the form of subjective judgment and recognition of success. You will find yourself asking such questions as: "Does he like to read?" "Does he read of his own accord?" "Can he use reading as a means of finding out?" "Can he use reading as a means of self entertainment?" "How does his skill compare with that of other children of his own age or grade level?" It is true that objective measures will enter into the picture and the answer to this last question may involve standardized testing. However, the tests will no longer set the standards but will merely be the

measure of results after the learning has been effected.

Summary

First, decide what you believe. This is a plea for a belief in emphasis on meanings instead of mechanics as a way of getting the right start in comprehension. Then plan the approach, the lesson procedure, and the practice periods with the getting of meaning always uppermost.

This is furthermore a plea for a developmental approach to teaching in place of a task-master procedure. Then plan the lesson sequence to motivate learnings based on meaningful concepts and include successful practice in learned responses, and plan the evaluation in terms of success and growth.

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Gifted Children Need Help in Reading, Too

by Ruth Strang
Teachers College
Columbia University

A GIFTED CHILD may be a retarded reader; he may be reading below his potentialities. According to this view of retardation in reading, a gifted pupil in grade nine with a mental age of sixteen—equivalent to grade eleven—is a retarded reader if his reading achievement is only on tenth grade level. This is a year above the norm for his class, but a year below his mental capacity.

In most reading programs the gifted child has been neglected. He has been allowed merely to mark time, or even to lose ground with respect to efficient reading and study habits. This often results in dissatisfaction on the part of the gifted student. As one bright college freshman said, "When I was in high school, I got by without doing any real studying. Of course I had a good time and was prominent in student activities. But underneath I had an uneasy feeling because I knew I was not using my abilities. When I came to college, I was definitely handicapped because I had not learned how to read and study efficiently."

Some Withdraw into Books

Some academically minded teachers have gone too far in the other direction. Having, themselves, such a reverence for book learning, they have encouraged the gifted child to read

intensively at the expense of a well-rounded development. Some gifted children have difficulty in making a good social adjustment. Many of them say, "The other kids do not like us." Hence they have a tendency to withdraw into books. One such child was described as follows:

"As far as her interests are concerned, Joan has one which is so dominant that she could easily do without any other activity, if she were left to choose for herself. This is reading. She reads anything that comes under her fingers, so long as it is printed. Her range goes from the funnies up to Bernard Shaw or Chaucer. Most of the books she reads are distinctly on the adult level, such as Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*, which she reads again and again with great delight."¹

This child herself said, "My reading is, and always has been almost omnivorous, if not quite."

In this case, the teachers were aware of Joan's need for personal-social development, and tried to help her relate herself more closely to other children. Nevertheless in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades Joan was, as

¹ Mary Hayden Bowen Wollner, *Children's Voluntary Reading as an Expression of Individuality*, p. 110. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949.

she herself said, "socially ostracized." This unpopularity seemed to be owing not only to her "difference" from other children in dress and manner, but also to her "indifference" to them. She had found in reading an escape mechanism. Even in the seventh and eighth grades she cultivated aloofness and was proud to be "an intellectual." In talking with people she tried to shift the conversation away from personal matters to a discussion of books, authors, and philosophy.

Joan was an extreme example of a highly gifted child who used reading as an escape from a social world with which she was not able to cope. She needed counseling which would help her learn to relate herself to one other person. She needed experience in small, congenial groups of pupils in which her contribution to the group goal was needed and appreciated. And she needed assistance in improving her personal appearance and developing competence in some sport popular with her age group. This was an exceptional case of a child who was retarded socially as much as she was accelerated intellectually.

While aware that a few gifted children may be using reading to satisfy a neurotic need, teachers will be most concerned with the cases first mentioned—the gifted children whose reading development and personal development through reading have been neglected.

Simple Rules for Reading Are Often Neglected

It is amazing how many bright college students and adults have never been taught efficient methods of read-

ing and study. One prominent business executive was worried because he could not cover all the reading material that was important for him. The trouble was that he had never acquired any systematic and flexible approach to reading. He was amazed at his increased efficiency when he followed a few simple rules:

1. Before reading an article, chapter or book, take a few minutes to answer such questions as these: What is my purpose in reading this? What do I already know about it? If I were the author, what would I say about the subject? How might this material add to what I already know?

2. Skim quickly, reading headings, topic sentences, the introductory paragraph, the summary, and other clues to the author's purpose, viewpoint, and organization of the material. This quick overview will give the reader a sense of the "layout" or structure which makes it easier for him to find what he is looking for.

3. List the questions which the material will probably answer.

4. Read to get the answers to these questions, or otherwise accomplish one's purpose.

5. Check by rereading, if necessary, to see if one has accomplished this purpose.

6. Put the information gained in the form in which one will use it.

In a reading class of officers at the Air University, one of the first questions raised was, "Why were we not taught these habits of effective reading in high school or college?" The answer was that the gifted students had been neglected. Since they met the average academic standards, their

teachers had made little or no effort to help them develop their reading potentialities.

Identifying Gifted Students

There are many ways of remedying this situation. First, the gifted students should be identified so that teachers may meet their needs. Incidentally, the teacher should also remember that one of their needs is *not* to be made to feel conspicuous, not to be singled out as exceptional and thus to incur the resentment of the other students.

At Long Beach, California, Dr. Virginia Bailard asked the counselors in each school to go over the cumulative records for the purpose of identifying the gifted and talented pupils. The counselors then interviewed these pupils and, if possible, their parents, and asked them to fill out a blank giving additional information about their goals, purposes, interests, and activities. A summary of such information, if it could be given to each teacher, would make him more alert to the needs of the gifted pupils in his class.

Providing Suitable Reading Materials

The second step is to provide for these needs by means of suitable reading materials covering a wide range of interests. This is a less difficult task for the gifted than for the retarded readers. The class libraries in each subject, the school library, the public library—all should furnish up-to-date reading material for these pupils. As one gifted ten-year-old, who had not learned to read, said to the psycholo-

gist, "If you'll give me interesting books, I'll learn to read." And he did.

So many of the texts, so many of the reference books on the shelves, are hopelessly dull and out of date. They present no challenge to gifted children.

Current magazines are of special interest to these pupils, and a portion of the budget for books might well be spent on magazines in art, science, and current events as well as in literature. The bulletin board is a useful device for encouraging boys and girls to read widely and bring in clippings of special interest. Later a committee may classify and file the clippings of permanent interest and value.

Individual reading related to a unit of study obviously demands a wide variety of books. For example, while studying the American Revolution one class of superior learners enjoyed reading Van Doren's *Mutiny in January*, Roberts' *Oliver Wiswell*, Forbes' *Paul Revere*, and Van Doren's *Secret History of the American Revolution*, as well as a wealth of similar reading matter, vivid and colorful.²

Another group read widely, using the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* to locate the facts about Woodrow Wilson's philosophy as presented in articles published in the 1920's and in the 1940's. This was preliminary to writing their own estimate of the ideas of Wilson.

² Frances Hunter Ferrell, "Techniques in Stimulating and Guiding the Reading Activities of Superior Learners in Junior and Senior High Schools," in *Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading*, p. 169, William S. Gray, Editor. Supplementary Educational Monographs No. 69, October 1949. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Stimulating Class Activities

The third approach to the problem of improving the reading of gifted children is through class activities. Intriguing assignments, often suggested by the pupils themselves, should replace the "busy work" that they are too frequently expected to do at home. They especially like to do outside reading for some social purpose, such as preparing to tell or read stories to groups of children or shut-ins at a hospital. They like to share the knowledge gained from reading. One group read about many famous people and each shared his knowledge with the group.

Projects in which they can make a special contribution to the group goal will stimulate them to read widely and well, with only a little instruction from the teacher. For example, one boy keenly interested in science was elected editor of the class *Science News*. He read a great deal in this field in order to write the more erudite articles for the magazine, but also put in a prominent place the contributions of the least able members of the class. In plays, in the preparation of assembly programs, in special study of famous persons, in book reviews for a social purpose, and in many other activities the gifted children can contribute to the group and learn to read more efficiently for these real purposes.

Results of Special Projects

The following project was carried on with a selected group of bright children.⁸ They were invited to take a reading course "frankly beyond their indicated reading ability and present

reading interests." There were to be no credits, no written book reports, no grades, and no rewards, other than informal discussions with teachers twice a month during the school day.

It was found that:

(1) The intimate atmosphere of this class excited "free discussion, good-natured disagreement and criticism, intelligent comment and true evaluation of books discussed."

(2) They read more widely. One girl said, "I never read so many books in so little time, and yet gained a knowledge of things I never knew about."

(3) They enjoyed the experience. A boy said, "I like the way we come into the room, and just sit down and talk things over."

That bright children will respond to the invitation to read books far beyond what we assume their reading level to be, is evidenced by typical books read: Bush, *Modern Arms and Free Men*; Carter, *Law, Its Origin, Growth and Function*; Chase, *The Economy of Abundance*; Flesch, *The Art of Plain Talk*. Gifted children are in their element when they have a wealth of reading material, freedom of choice, and opportunity to discuss what they have read.

Another group of gifted high school seniors, thinking back over their experiences in school, made comments such as the following:

"The happiest experience I had in elementary school was in the fifth grade . . . We were not limited to a

⁸ Margaret Gregory and William J. McLaughlin, "Advanced Reading for the Bright Child," *Clearing House*, XXVI (December, 1951), 203-205.

regular schedule of study. If we were slow in certain fields, we had time to catch up. If we were faster than most in other particular fields, we were given a chance to go ahead and make as much advancement as we could safely. Another important factor was that we were given a chance to develop our ingenuity and use our ideas instead of our teacher's plans."

"In the last years of the elementary school it is very important for the pupils to be prepared to do junior high work. They should learn to use their own ideas, develop reading methods, take notes, plan reports, write essays, and choose subjects for study or reporting. In high school one has to be able to pick a topic, study it, take notes, and write a report using the facts in his own way. The better prepared a person is for a reading or study job, the more vigorously he will attack it. That is because he will have self-confidence."

Attention should not be fixed too exclusively on reading. Other experiences and sources of information are necessary and desirable. As one gifted girl wrote:

"Elementary school should be made as pleasant as possible so that good feelings for school will develop. If children do not think elementary school is exciting, how will they ever last through high school and college? I think the program should include field trips to places of interest and to the country to find insects, flowers, etc. I think children should definitely be introduced to handicraft, art, and music, and if the teachers themselves don't know enough about these things,

outsiders should be brought in. Children should be given ample time and materials for artistic expression of all kinds. In fact, this might even help the teacher to understand each child better psychologically."

This is the way these gifted children write and think. Their reading should be on the same high level.

Counseling Gifted Children

The fourth approach involves the counseling of gifted children to help them improve their reading interests and tastes, and to use reading in conjunction with radio, TV, films, and other avenues of learning.

A few gifted children, who, for one reason or another have not learned to read, need remedial help. Starting with their present reading level, teachers can help them to make up for educational deprivation and to have any physical defects corrected. Expert counselors can help individuals gain an understanding of themselves and of any emotional factors or conflicts that may be causing a resistance to reading or preventing them from putting forth the effort that effective reading requires.

For Further Reading

A NEW 48-page pamphlet, "Helping the Gifted Child" by Paul Witty, will be welcome reading for teachers and parents. Suggestions are given for discovering the gifted and for helping them at school and at home.

Published by Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., Chicago 10, Ill. Price, 40 cents.

Five Boys With Problems Learn to Read

by Barbara K. Leibman

Reading Consultant, P.S. 165

Queens, New York

MANY PRINCIPALS and teachers today are recognizing the need for special care for those children who have reading problems. Boys and girls who reach the third and fourth grades with reading disabilities need special attention and are receiving this care in different ways. Forward looking principals and teachers realize that a child with a reading problem often becomes a school problem in many other respects. Likewise it is felt that varied problems do cause reading failure and that these problems should be investigated along with help in reading. The following experimental program was tried in a New York City school to meet the needs of a small number of children having difficulty in reading.

During the early part of the school year the third and fourth grade teachers were asked to select a child for a remedial reading class which was to meet three times a week during the school day. The requirements were that the child be of average intelligence, be more than a year retarded in reading and be judged able to benefit from remedial reading.

After meeting all the children, the remedial reading teacher, who was a classroom teacher on the staff, selected four children, all boys. They all voiced dislike for reading and were behavior problems in their groups. But they all showed interest in the

class and in the help they would receive. All were non-readers.

The Boys in the Group

The boys were emotional problems. John was a disruptive influence in his room. He started fights with his classmates and paid little attention in the learning situation. The home environment was not stimulating. The mother had despaired of John's learning to read. John had been convinced by this time that he would never learn to read and that he was quite stupid. He was disruptive in class and probably thought that this was his role.

Gus was very insecure. He daydreamed in class, and his mother complained of the same thing at home. He never remembered messages and would forget to deliver them when they were written down. His recall was very poor. He was a submissive child who was afraid to dirty himself. Gus had many feelings of inadequacy which he overtly hid by being a "very good boy."

Ralph was the oldest boy in the group. Ralph had a vicious temper and was constantly in fights. He would fight with "murder" in his eyes. He spoke of having a beautiful home although he knew his remedial reading teacher had visited the two rooms where he lived with his parents and two sisters. He told many "tall stories."

Mike sought attention by being silly and "dirty." He used baby talk and spoke often about toilet habits. When asked what story he wanted to write about he would say, "About bologna and salami." Mike was submissive in his own classroom. He was thought to be the baby of his class. Mike's mother felt that the school wasn't doing enough for her son. "He doesn't know anything," she would say. "He's so dumb he can't read."

The Painless Approach

Since these children had met failure consistently in the classroom reading situation, a "painless" approach geared towards children's interests was used. At the initial interviews, when the boys were asked about their special interests, they all stated that they liked planes and enjoyed modeling them. Model planes were bought from school funds, and the first few sessions were spent in modeling.

Informal discussions were held about reading. The children showed intense dislike for reading, and a few of them stated that their dislike might be due to the fact that they had met failure in reading. These frank talks helped the boys to understand their problems better and also showed them that there were other children with similar difficulties.

After the first few sessions Alex joined the group. He insisted upon coming with his classmates because he heard that the boys were "having fun" and were, of course, getting special attention. Thus the group was increased to five.

Alex was a very outspoken child demanding his share of attention and

resenting attention shown to other children. He spoke out in class and was selfish about sharing things. Alex was an attention seeker and a bluffer. He told "tall stories" to cover his own feelings of inadequacy. He always spoke in a loud voice and often fought with other boys.

The boys tested the limits of the remedial situation for the first month. This was an entirely new situation for them. Their difficulty in reading had been accepted. They were now exploring to find their exact roles in the situation. They were seeking to find just what behavioral freedom they would have. The group met two days a week in the shop room and the third day in an empty classroom.

The boys climbed on benches, threw pieces of wood and misbehaved in general. In instances such as these the teacher would explain, "I realize that sometimes we feel like doing naughty things. But in school we must take care of school property. When we feel like doing these things we must remember that we must have self-control and keep ourselves from doing anything disrupting to the room or to those around us."

After patient explanation and acceptance of the boys' wishes and acts, they gradually calmed down and after six weeks accepted the limits completely. The situation was freer than the classroom set-up and a permissive atmosphere prevailed. However, limits were set on disruptive behavior.

In modeling the planes the boys had to follow written directions included in the set. Certain of the key words were written on a chart with the related drawings next to them.

Though the words were difficult, the boys, except for Gus, learned them and recognized them on their plans.

After the planes were finished, the group was taken by their remedial reading teacher to La Guardia Airport. They went on a complete tour through the hangars, the weather roof and the skywalk next to the control tower.

Word Recognition Games

Back at school the children wrote an experience story about the trip. Key words were put on hand-made tachistoscopes and cards were made for individually needed study. A week was spent in playing games with these words. Some of the games were Bingo, Slide Phrases, Go Fish, Matching and Picture Words.

Bingo cards with words from the story were made by the teacher.

Flash cards with the same words were held up by the teacher and spoken as they were shown. The children covered the identical word on their card. When a complete line was covered the child had bingo.

The boys helped in making the devices for Slide Phrases from small boxes. Slits were cut in one side of the box. Phrases were written on long strips of paper fastened like a scroll to pencil stubs at either end. When the pencils were twirled at the back of the box, the paper slipped through the front end and a moving slide effect was formed.

Two sets of cards with identical words were used for Matching. Two children played together, taking turns in turning over a card from one pack while the other child looked for the

same word in his set, called the word and placed the two cards together.

To play Go Fish, cards with words printed on them were fastened together by a metal clip or straight pin. The cards were placed in a bowl and the children used a magnet to draw the cards. If the child called the word properly he kept the card, otherwise he threw the word back. The child with the most words at the end of the game was the winner.

With such varied techniques for studying vocabulary this learning was no longer a hated chore. After two weeks the boys were able to read the story individually and to identify the words out of context.

For three months no books were used. Homemade material was used, experience stories written, Dolch word cards and other Dolch material were used and word games were played. The boys made picture dictionary booklets. They left pages blank after each letter. Each new word they learned was printed in the proper place in the book. If it was an action word, they drew a picture next to it.

Evidence of Enjoyment

The boys enjoyed coming to the sessions even though an ideal physical set-up did not exist. The shop was no longer available. For two months unoccupied rooms were used. When classes returned from recess or assembly, the group scouted for another room carrying all the equipment with them. At some times the boys just squatted on the floor in the play-yard. They did not ask to return to their rooms but seemed to accept some of the ridiculous situations with whole-

some good humor. The boys were always free to decline coming to the sessions. At certain times they preferred to go to recess with their class. Because there was only one hour available for the remedial reading teacher to see the boys this was unavoidable.

At the middle of the year the first book was introduced. The boys had by this time a vocabulary of fifty to one hundred words. *Straight Up* from the Lent series of Aviation Readers was used. Three of the boys devoured the book. These three achieved great success with the first three pages. John said, "This is the first time I've ever read three pages in a book all by myself." The boys were so thrilled that they asked to read for their mothers, the teacher and the principal.

The principal gave the boys commendation cards for progress in reading. He also invited them to a college class. Two boys went and, though shy at first, read for the group and related experiences about the reading class. Here was the turning point for these two boys, John and Alex. They had achieved success and were recognized for their accomplishments.

However, John's mother negated some of his thrill. When he read for her, she said, "When are you going to read the whole book? Is that all you learned?" It is no wonder that the road is such a slow and perilous one for these children!

The boys' reading and behavior in class were affected by any emotional upset or break in the running of the class. After a vacation there would be a period of retesting and readjustment. There were pitfalls and pla-

teaus. But at least the fear of the printed word was gone. Their self-evaluation had become higher and more secure.

Individual Progress

The children progressed at their own speed until after a while the class broke down into two groups. The boys kept progress charts and continued their modeling with ships. They did very careful work and were able to follow the plans better. They loved to hear stories told and read. After a story was read some of the boys went to the book and tried to pick out words. Experience stories were now written individually, and the boys worked with their own stories. An exhibit of their modeling and individual stories was placed outside the principal's office. The boys were very proud of this because they were now receiving school recognition.

All of these boys were emotional problems. At the end of the year success was met by all except Gus. Alex and John were ready for second grade reading and Mike and Ralph were completing first grade work.

Gus still blocked toward reading. He remained shy, introverted and submissive. Gus showed some overt, nervous manifestations. His recall was very poor. He seemed preoccupied. A psychological examination was suggested for Gus with further individual help. He did meet some success, and some of his fears had lessened. It was noted by the classroom teachers that the classroom behavior of all of the boys had improved since they had been in the special reading group.

Even though an ideal physical set-up did not exist, the attention, acceptance and recognition seemed to have been ample motivation for progress. The work could have gone further if the remedial reading teacher had not had other commitments. This caused the interruption of the meetings. The poor physical conditions also prevented a smooth running schedule for the group.

Individual Attention Paid Off

It is felt that the close relationship built up between the remedial reading teacher and the boys effected

a greater degree of achievement than was experienced in their classroom work. In the case of Ralph and Mike there was not as great an improvement in regular classroom work as that experienced with the group. It was therefore recommended that they, as well as Gus, continue with individual help in the school for the following year.

However, if just the attitude of each boy toward reading was altered from a negativistic one to a desirable one, the year's work would seem to be rewarding for the boys, the teacher, and the school.

DR. DONALD L. CLELAND
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER, I.C.I.R.I.
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH 13, PENNSYLVANIA

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Developing Readiness in the Middle Grades

by Lillian L. Gore

Supervisor of Elementary Schools
Montgomery County, Maryland

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that the concept of readiness first made its impact on teaching at the beginning reading level. The development of the young child and his language was the subject of study before that of his older sibling. Thus, teachers had scientific data about the young child. They also learned much about him from his parents with whom information was mutually shared. The foundation was laid through research and study in child development. Thus most of the studies of reading readiness deal with children in beginning first grade.

However, the factors of growth and experience which identify readiness for beginning reading seem to apply with equal significance at all levels and for all kinds of instruction.

Factors in Readiness for Reading In the Middle Grades

The teacher of the intermediate grades, therefore, takes into account mental, physical, social, emotional, and experiential factors. Each factor has different weight for different children, but all are important aspects of the total growth of the child. Let us examine these factors briefly to understand their application to the middle-grade child.

We may assume that the child's ex-

This article is intended to supplement the group of articles on "Reading Readiness" which appeared in the November issue of The Reading Teacher.

periences are affected by his pattern of growth, his health condition, and his motor functioning. Through his experiences he is building interests and understandings, and developing skills of many kinds—physical, social, intellectual. Thus he is building a feeling of adequacy within himself which gives him confidence and power to undertake the increasingly complex job of reading. The physical factors are contributing to this progress.

The child's social and emotional growth likewise influences everything he does, including improvement in reading. Usually the child in the middle grades is secure in his affectionate relationships with parents and siblings. He is well established as a club member which gives him a feeling of belonging. He is ready for widening social contacts in the home and elsewhere although he prefers friends of his own sex.

Such a child is able to use his available energy with efficiency and satis-

faction. He is not slowed down by fears, by a feeling of rejection, or a sense of inadequacy in social situations.

Often girls and boys differ in their choice of reading materials. They like to work in groups. Peer values are important to them. Knowing these things, we can see the advantage of grouping children according to their social and personal needs.

The child's background of experiences becomes increasingly significant for learning as he grows older. If his experience has been meager, his learning has been meager. If it has been rich, the child has built a large backlog of concepts to bring to his reading.

The mental equipment which the child brings to his environment is another important factor to be considered. Reading is dependent upon the child's ability to acquire sensations, concepts, and generalizations, and to use them for his purposes. As with other factors, range here is wide in any normal middle grade class, often seven years or more.

Some children in the middle grades will never read at the fourth-reader level. Some will do it only after many and varied first-hand experiences for acquiring simple ideas.

On the other hand, some children now in the middle grades were reading at the age of five. Like the slower readers, advanced readers in the middle grades need concrete experiences. But they need them on an advanced level of complexity. They are ready for reading materials at the secondary level of difficulty and for more refined and complex reading skills.

What We Should Know About Each Child

Since readiness for reading implies the necessity to appraise the child's status, certain kinds of data are needed by the teacher. The permanent record of every child should include the following information:

1. The condition of his organs for seeing, hearing, smelling, etc.
2. His health history, especially noting illnesses which might explain the energy he has for his work.
3. His speech problems particularly as they may relate to oral reading and vocabulary recognition.
4. His home background, particularly as it explains the educational level of the family, their speech patterns and language habits; his book and story opportunities; travel and other family experiences.
5. His social and emotional adjustment, as indicating reasonable freedom from fears, uncertainties, withdrawals, discouragements, conflicts with others.
6. His mental and educational status as indicated by standardized and informal tests.

Such information accumulated through the years will reveal significant trends in the child's growth.

Moving Ahead In Reading Skills

In the middle grades, one of the big objectives is to encourage the child to grow into a higher reading level appropriate to his experience and ability. This is most easily achieved if the child has use for the content or material he is reading. When

this is the case, he is interested in what he is reading. And if he is interested, it is generally due to his backlog of direct and vicarious experiences which in turn clarify the new concepts being encountered.

The learning in this situation includes concept and vocabulary building, including word recognition; understanding ideas; selecting and organizing them for a particular purpose. Let me tell you of such a situation.

Montgomery County is a rich agricultural area where county fairs and horse shows stir tremendous interest among adults and children alike. In one fourth grade, the interest of every child seemed to be centered in horses. It was no wonder that this interest affected choices of reading materials and progress in reading growth.

The children and their teacher assembled or created a variety of materials about horses. Reading texts, science books, story books, news clippings and pictures were brought together. These materials ranged in difficulty from primer to eighth grade. Independent reading for sharing and research was carried on eagerly.

On one side of the room the children displayed a hundred or more pictures of horses from all over the world and of many kinds and uses. Some were clipped from periodicals. Some were drawings of heads and of various body types. Some were imaginative presentations.

As the reading and discussion progressed every child was building a cumulative vocabulary and body of concepts. And as more stories were

used acquaintance with these words and concepts was strengthened through repetition and variety. At the same time direct instruction was given in techniques of understanding, selecting, and organizing ideas.

Development of readiness for reading the next story seemed to be a natural outcome of pursuing this interest in horses. Without this great interest and the cumulative effect of a continuing enterprise, reading progress would probably have been less effective.

More Complex Techniques

In the middle grades reading techniques become more refined and complex. Tastes are extended and raised. Reading increasingly reinforces other learnings, and it is being used for more varied purposes by the learner. This requires such reading abilities as:

1. The ability to understand increasingly complex units of organized meanings, such as sentences, paragraphs, chapters.
2. The ability to use and recognize a wide vocabulary, both general and specialized.
3. The ability to select, organize, and interpret meanings according to the purpose of the reader.
4. The ability to acquire a stock of concepts necessary to interpret the reading material for vivid and accurate meaning.

Both natural science and the social studies give wide opportunity for the development of such abilities. One sixth grade group was concerned with the problem of weather, climate, and seasonal change as they affected use

of the school playground. It was a problem that had arisen naturally in the group as part of their regular work in conservation. The children needed to find answers to many questions because the questions affected them personally. The result was an eager search for information in reference books, weather reports, weather maps and charts, and audio-visual materials. A real attitude of scientific inquiry came in working out various experiments about air pressure, evaporation and condensation. Such data helped them solve their problems. The techniques of study-type reading were developed in this problem solving situation. And many techniques of recording and note-taking were acquired.

In developing this unit of work, the youngsters built their own readiness for more complex reading techniques. This was part of the process. With teacher guidance they developed the skills needed for the various techniques and learned "when to use which" as one boy aptly phrased it.

Let Children Know Their Needs

My experience shows that a child is ready to move forward only as he recognizes his own reading needs. The teacher can help by discussing with the child his own specific strengths and needs. With the help of the teacher, the child must learn to take responsibility for his progress. This means that the teacher must make continuous appraisal of the strengths and difficulties of each child. Many teachers keep a folder for each child containing samples of his work. These samples include informal, objective

data intended to reveal trends in the child's progress.

Some types which have been rewarding to both children and teachers are: (1) the child's story dictated to the teacher to be read; (2) new words of significance to a piece of work and showing growth in vocabulary; (3) outlines, ranging from mere lists to three sub-heads; (4) lists of familiar words containing certain prefixes and suffixes; (5) interpretation of syllabication, accent marks, diacritical marks; (6) checks on such techniques as reading for detail, for general significance of a selection, organizing ideas, etc.; (7) charts, graphs, maps carrying data obtained from reading.

If the child has access to these samples of his work, they will be a powerful motivation to teacher and pupil by revealing objective evidence of progress.

In Conclusion

The teacher in grades four, five, and six no longer thinks that the reading skills and attitudes established in the primary grades will suffice through all grades. He feels the responsibility for continuing certain important jobs. One of these is to recognize readiness as a condition of the learner brought about at all levels by certain interrelated factors. Another is to work with children in terms of their continuous and cumulative growth. As he does this, he recognizes the concept of readiness as furnishing the bridge from one learning to another in a manner that is geared to the learning needs, maturity level, and potentialities of each child.

What Other Magazines are Saying About the Teaching of Reading

Reviews of recent magazine articles on the teaching of reading are included at the request of many teachers to encourage further reading and discussion.—Editor

"Reading and Personal Satisfaction" by Roma Gans. *Childhood Education*, November, 1952.

The complexity of "the learning-to-read process" frequently attracts so much attention that we fail to recognize the deep and personal satisfactions which come even to the very young reader. After citing instances of such satisfactions, Dr. Gans lists three points which seem basic to a child's wholesome growth as a reader:

1. He should have the opportunity to read in a variety of ways that are satisfying to him.

2. Teachers and parents should help him plan a daily life conducive to such personal reading moments.

3. Such experiences should be honored not simply as extra or unassigned "dribbles" in the child's reading, but rather as basic motivators to further reading, to more satisfactory social behavior, and hence to inner serenity and richness.

"Research and Reading Instruction" by George W. Bond. *Childhood Education*, November, 1952.

The factor of primary importance in the hundreds and hundreds of published papers on the teaching of reading is "the expanding concept of the reading act. We now know," continues Dr. Bond, "that factors such as emotional stability, vision, the fam-

ily situation, and school adjustment are just as important in learning to read as are phonetic analysis or a knowledge of prefixes and root words."

The article summarizes research findings in five main areas: (1) grouping, (2) individualizing reading instruction, (3) experience reading and the basal reader, (4) formal reading readiness and the readiness program, and (5) suggested research.

In each area the author finds contradictory reports and recommendations. His summary makes concise and provocative reading. His bibliography charts a good course for further reading which most teachers will find enjoyable and highly profitable.

"Every Child Reads Successfully in a Multiple-Level Program" by Kathleen B. Hester. *The Elementary School Journal*, October, 1952.

The usual grouping of children for the teaching of reading is into fast, average, and slow groups. This implies that all children have the same needs and that the only difference is in how slowly or how rapidly the material is covered.

Yet studies in child growth and development show that a child's growth pattern varies from time to time and is different from that of other children. Reading can help the

child achieve his maximum growth if reading materials meet the child's needs and interests and if reading instruction is appropriate to his pace of growth.

Acceptance of this philosophy means the teacher will avoid having three or four groups each moving over the same course at a different pace. It means a flexible plan of grouping to provide for the needs of each child who may change from day to day.

The multiple-level program permits children to join the group or groups that meet their needs. It is explained to children that everyone has certain reading needs. Different reading groups will be formed to work on specific needs, and children are invited to join the group or groups which they think will be most helpful to them. If a child finds the work in one group too difficult, he is free to move to another group. When he sees he needs help in certain skills, he joins the group working on that particular skill.

The author reports greater reading progress and pupil satisfaction from this multiple-level reading program.

"Stephen and Books" by Edna Long. *Childhood Education*, November, 1952.

This is a delightful account written by the mother in a "book-reading" family. Before going to school Stephen was a bookworm, but his longing for books and pleasure in reading faded during the first year of school. After two years of watching and waiting, this very thoughtful mother sees Stephen growing into a real love of

reading. This is an encouraging report for teachers and parents.

"Bibliotherapy in the Middle Grades" by Hannah M. Lindahl and Katharine Koch. *Elementary English*, November, 1952.

Recreational reading can give mental and emotional therapy to the child through his identification with a book character who is faced with a problem or situation similar to his own.

To be able to use bibliotherapy in child guidance the teacher must know the individual child's problems and must be familiar with children's books. To acquaint them with children's books, the authors have included an excellent annotated list of books which can be helpful in bibliotherapy. Books on this list are grouped under the following headings:

Adjusting to School

Economic Insecurity

Feeling of Inferiority and Not Belonging

Feeling of Superiority

Meeting Trouble and Facing Responsibility

Personal Fears

Physical Handicaps

Racial Insecurity

Most teachers will want to keep this list of books in their top desk drawer for frequent reference.

"Experience Charts in Primary Reading" by Mary Frey Kersting. *Elementary English*, November, 1952.

Children's experiences are very real to them. To tell of those experiences and record them on experience charts adds great interest and pride in the young "authors." This pride and in-

terest, combined with the background of experience, foster healthy reading growth.

"How Well Do Modern Schools Teach Reading?" by Paul Witty. *Today's Health*, November, 1952.

A summary of available research shows that schools are doing a relatively superior job today in the teaching of reading. Widespread criticism of the teaching of reading today may be accounted for by the following facts:

1. The modern school enrolls pupils of widely varying abilities within every class.

2. Formal instruction in reading generally ceases in grade six although the wide range of reading abilities including varied retardation continues through high school.

3. The modern school makes a great variety of demands in reading.

4. While the *average* attainment in reading has not declined, the retarded reader and the superior pupil have frequently been neglected.

Evidence is given that the situation can be improved and that few non-readers are "incurable."

A number of studies show that about half of the poor readers who were interviewed also had some emotional problem. Many showed dissatisfactions, frustrations, anxieties and insecurities.

Finally Dr. Witty makes suggestions for parents who are interested in correcting and preventing reading problems. The article is splendid reading for teachers and good documentary evidence to have on hand when questions are raised by parents.

"Factors That Influence Language Growth: Home Influences" by Dorothea McCarthy. *Elementary English*, November, 1952.

Children entering school at five or six differ greatly in their language development. The range of differences is so wide, that teachers must inevitably ask what home influences have brought about these differences before the child enters school. For it is recognized that oral language facility is essential to school success.

Dr. McCarthy's article summarizes

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the research in various areas with certain significant conclusions:

1. Serious and sometimes permanent language retardation occurs in children who have been brought up in an institutional environment where they lacked individual attention and mothering. A normal family environment is important for a child's language progress even in early infancy.

2. The kind of relationship that exists between mother and child is of tremendous significance in hindering or facilitating his language growth.

3. A child's facility with language may be strengthened by the opportunities for two-way conversation in the home and the outward show of affection in the family circle.

4. The child from a foreign language home has great difficulties to overcome in learning the strange language of the school. This will be more easily accomplished if he is made to feel pride in his two languages and secure in his school environment.

5. Differences in home background mean differences in language experience and hence differences in children's readiness to read.

6. The child who is emotionally insecure often has some language disorder. In any group of children "who are manifesting severe behavioral disorders the number of severe reading and speech problems is much higher than would be found in a sample of normal school children."

7. The teacher who has a warm outgoing personality and who shows genuine interest in the child is more likely to be more successful in remedial work.

This is the second in a series of articles being prepared by Dr. McCarthy for *Elementary English*. The first dealt with the child's equipment for language growth. Future articles will treat school and community influences.

Reading Conferences

The New Year ushers in a series of reading conferences throughout the country.

In Florida, the University of Miami is sponsoring a number of conferences throughout the state: January 7 in Orlando, January 8 in Fort Myers, and January 9-10 in Miami.

Speakers for the Florida conferences include Dr. Edgar Dale of Ohio State University, Dr. A. Sterl Artley of the University of Missouri, and Dr. Paul Witty of Northwestern University.

Temple Institute

Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Director of the Reading Clinic at Temple University, Philadelphia, has announced the program for the 1953 Institute, February 2-6.

The theme for the Institute is "The Curriculum Approach to Reading Instruction." Speakers will include Dr. Daniel A. Prescott, Dr. William D. Sheldon, Dr. Paul Witty, Nancy Larick, Eleanor Johnson, Grace Alder Dorsey, Phyllis Fenner, Dr. Linda G. Smith, and Dorothy Cadwallader.

In addition to the lectures, there will be laboratories, demonstrations and evaluation sessions for various grade levels.

Keep Slow Readers With Their Classroom Group

by William W. Oswalt
Reading Supervisor
Hampton Township Schools
Allison Park, Pennsylvania

DURING the 1951-52 school term I served as the first Reading Supervisor in the Hampton Township School District. One of my duties was to relieve one of our sixth grade teachers so she could carry on a speech correction program.

In our school there were two sixth grades comprising 75 students. It was agreed that while I taught the basal reading program, the other teacher would give differentiated instruction in arithmetic.

The first step in establishing reading groups was to go through the cumulative records and group the children according to previous teacher comments. Secondly, we administered Form I of the *Gates Reading Survey* and refined the groups.

After I had worked a few weeks with the groups, the grouping was refined again. The following groups emerged after about four weeks: 44 at the sixth reader level, 12 at the fifth reader level, 12 at the fourth reader level, and seven remedials at the pre-primer level. The reading levels for the seven remedials were determined through the use of an informal reading inventory.

Instructional periods were divided into three forty-minute periods. Each student had one period of reading, one of arithmetic, and the third was a

"free" period in which he could complete unfinished assignments, read for pleasure, carry on research, etc. The remedial students received forty-five minutes of special instruction during the afternoon and used their "reading" period for follow-up activities.

Due to crowded conditions in the lower grades, basal texts were scarce, but after a thorough search we found enough fourth, fifth and sixth grade texts which were new to the students. The remedials were allowed to select the text that they would like to read. They chose the *Betts Series* primarily because the books were brand new and totally unfamiliar to them. Supplemental materials consisted of any books or pamphlets they desired to read.

The developmental students chose the *Ginn Series*, *Reader's Digest*, *American Adventure Series*, and scores of library books. The librarian, being familiar with their reading levels, helped in providing a prodigious amount of reading materials.

As soon as grouping was initiated, every student had the principle of grouping explained to him. The youngsters came to realize that reading below "grade level" was not a sign of mental retardation. Everyone accepted the situation, and soon

the better readers became quite interested in the progress of the slower readers. This situation provided the right mental climate for other differentiated instruction.

Remedial Instruction

The seven boys who comprised the remedial group were of normal intelligence. All were eager to learn how to read, and to facilitate matters, they were proud of having a man as their teacher. Special instruction was given every afternoon for forty-five minutes. During this time a sight vocabulary was developed, concepts were clarified, questions were designed to stimulate inferential thinking, and word recognition skills were developed. Exercises and worksheets were used to develop a sensitivity to main ideas, details, fact vs. opinion, sequence of events, and later structural analysis.

By the end of the year, informal reading inventories showed the following results: two boys were reading at the third reader level, four at the fourth reading level, and one at the fifth.

Bringing Remedials Into the Developmental Program

The boys and girls in the sixth grade were eager to study plant life. I used this situation to integrate remedial and developmental instruction. The class divided the plant into its four major parts: root, stem, leaves, and blossom. They then divided themselves into four committees for the purpose of studying these four parts of the plant. The remedial group distributed themselves fairly evenly over the four committees.

Time was then provided for each group to go to the library and conduct research. Any material that a remedial could read he read and reported to the group. If he found an article he could not read, one of the better readers read it to him.

After the research was completed, we met and constructed experience charts. Remedials, having a fair background on their topics, contributed freely to the construction of the charts. After the charts were completed the remedials *vigorously* volunteered to read them orally to the group. Other children in the class were pleased with the seven boys' performance, and needless to say, the boost to the boys' morale was tremendous.

Upon completion of the unit, an objective test was constructed covering the material learned. Each question was formulated so as to include only the vocabulary used in the experience charts. When the scores of the developmental group were compared with the remedial group, it was discovered that the remedials received higher grades than the developmental group.

This seemed to show that remedial readers can and should become working members of the regular classroom reading activities. In the initial stages it is difficult to integrate the activities, but once a certain level of proficiency is obtained the integration is possible. The satisfaction which comes from such teaching is great for the teacher, but it's even greater for each pupil.

*Turn to page 45 for news of the
I.C.I.R.I Meeting in Atlantic City.*

Reading Council News

Dr. Donald Cleland, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the I.C.I.R.I., reports a great increase in membership and in queries about forming local councils.

On page 14 of this issue of *THE READING TEACHER* are listed the names and addresses of those who have inquired about forming a local council. Others who are interested in membership are asked to get in touch with the person in their area who has already expressed interest in starting a local council.

Two new reading councils have been formed: The Chicago Area Council and the Kern County, California, Council.

The Queensboro, New York, group is preparing a constitution at this time and will soon qualify as an official local council.

Pittsburgh Council

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council of the I.C.I.R.I. held its first dinner meeting on November 21, at the Congress of Clubs in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The dinner speaker was Miss Margaret Gnade, Supervisor for the Society for the Prevention of Blindness, who suggested ways by which teachers can identify and help the visually handicapped child.

Franklin C. Spittler, Supervising Principal of the Baldwin Township Schools, was elected Council President for the coming year.

Other officers are: *Vice-president*, Dr. Mary Dunn, Uniontown, Pa.; *Secretary*, Miss Betty Zeigler, Pitts-

burgh; *Treasurer*, Miss Josephine Tronsberg, University of Pittsburgh; *Program Chairman*, Dr. Helen Bachman Knipp, Baldwin Township Schools.

Kern County Council

Lillian Gray, professor of education at San Jose State College, was the guest speaker at the November dinner meeting of the Kern County Reading Council at Bakersfield, California.

Chairman of arrangements for the dinner was Dr. Elcy McGovern, State Chairman of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction.

On Long Island

The Long Island Council for the Improvement of Reading would like to tell you something about our work thus far in the hope that perhaps a little of it may be of some value to your local chapter.

Our first year's theme probably could be called "getting acquainted." Our aim was to meet and become acquainted with as many people interested in reading as possible. It was heartening to see how many people were earnestly interested in joining any group devoted to the improvement of reading. With very little publicity during the first year, we drew classroom teachers, supervising principals, principals, reading supervisors, consultants, and even a children's court judge, who somehow heard of our meetings.

During our first year we held three meetings. Perhaps the one which

pointed us in the best direction for year 1952-53 was the last meeting in the spring of 1952. On that occasion, Dr. Harris, president of I.C.I.R.I., spoke to us. His plea to get away from having noted speakers at every meeting directed our thinking for the year 1952-53. We all agreed that our greatest strength lay in utilizing local people as much as possible. Many people at that meeting reaffirmed their desire to hear, learn and gain from people near and around us as much as possible.

Our first meeting of 1952-53 was held in October. It was devoted to the discussion of reading programs on Long Island. Representatives from public and private elementary schools and junior and senior high schools told about the reading programs carried on in their schools. We then had a representative from one of the local colleges describe that reading program and how the college's testing and reading clinics could be helpful to the community.

Our second meeting will be held jointly with the English Council of Long Island. We are very proud of this meeting and feel we should continue to work with similar organizations. Our topic will be problems of reading common to both Councils.

Our third meeting will be a reading workshop scheduled for February 24, 1953. It will be devoted to discussion of classroom reading procedures and techniques with demonstrations of methods.

During the first meeting of the year questionnaires were handed out to all members. Each was asked to list in order of preference which area

he would like to attend during the February workshop. Such topics as reading tests, phonics, comprehension and interpretation, informal inventory tests, grouping, children's books, and workbooks were among those listed. Each group will be limited to ten with a discussion leader and secretary. Following the group meetings, a general meeting will be held at which each group secretary will report on his group's discussion.

At our fourth meeting, to be held on April 27th, 1953, Dr. Emmett A. Betts will speak on "Differentiated Guidance in Reading Instruction" with demonstrations.

Next year we hope to participate with a reading program at the annual meeting of the New York State Teachers Association. We have begun negotiations with their program planning committee.

Attendance at this year's meetings has been double that of last year. We believe this is due in part to a steady publicity campaign. Meetings are announced in the local papers and on local radio stations. Letters of announcement are sent to all school faculty associations in the area. Finally a personal reminder is sent to each member a week before the meeting is to be held.

Our executive board meets about twice before each meeting to iron out possible snags and complications that we may encounter. We feel that such small things as name tags for members to wear at each meeting, and the use of first names wherever possible add to the friendly, informal atmosphere which we strive to achieve.

—*Sidney Schaffer*

**The International Council
for the Improvement of Reading Instruction**

Program to be held during the annual conference of
The American Association of School Administrators
Atlantic City, N. J.

Monday, February 16, 1953, 2:30 p.m.

Presiding:

Dr. Paul Witty, Northwestern University

Addresses:

RESEARCH SHOWS THE WAY TO BETTER READING INSTRUCTION

Dr. Virgil Herrick, University of Wisconsin

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE NEWER RESOURCES AVAILABLE?

Dr. Lou LaBrant, New York University

Panel:

Nila B. Smith

Donald L. Cleland

Althea Beery

Nancy Larrick

William Brink

Emmett A. Betts

Ruth Strang

Gerald A. Yoakam

Summary Presentation:

Dr. Albert J. Harris, Queens College, New York

*The exact meeting place for this I.C.I.R.I. program will be announced in the
official A.A.S.A. Program available in Atlantic City.*

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